

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
CITY COUNCIL
PUBLIC SPEAKING SESSION
MONDAY, APRIL 15, 2013
6:30 PM**

ATTENDANCE: Council members: Brannelly, Stafstrom, Banta, Taylor-Moye, Olson, Brantley, T. McCarthy, Lyons, Vizzo-Paniccia, Bonney, Blunt, dePara, Ayala, Paoletto, Baker, Holloway

ABSENT: Council members: Austin, Silva, Martinez

Council President McCarthy called the public speaking session to order at 6:35 pm.

THE FOLLOWING NAMED PERSON HAS REQUESTED PERMISSION TO ADDRESS THE CITY COUNCIL ON MONDAY, APRIL 15, 2013 AT 6:30 P.M., IN THE CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL, 45 LYON TERRACE, BRIDGEPORT, CT.

NAME

SUBJECT

Ethan Book
144 Coleman Street
Bridgeport, CT 06604

Political Cancer in State Government.

Below are the comments presented during the public speaking session

Mr. Council President, Members of the City Council and public. I am Ethan Book temporarily residing in Bridgeport for eight years I operate a small limousine service business New England Limousine Service of Fairfield and for matters related to some long term unaddressed matters in state public works I am a candidate for the U.S. Senate 2010. As brief explanation the primary focus of my active candidacy is a federal court challenge of portions of the 2010 statewide election process.

In the late1980's as a specialized bank officer I appeared before this Council regarding issues of activities of the Connecticut Resources Recovery Authority CRRA including of the curious program by which the City of Bridgeport hosts the 300 million Greater Bridgeport Resource Recovery Project which is located on Howard Avenue next to Long Island Sound.

Without those issues being reasonably resolved more than two years ago, I began again to appear before this Council to speak about matters which appear to be curious state and local government reactions to my role in seeking to have resolved the unaddressed CRRA issues. It seems that these unaddressed issues of major public significance repeatedly merge with other issues of great public importance.

Regarding these issues, I have used the term “unaddressed long-term political cancer in the state government”. Let’s look at that a bit closer! I have here the text of an article which appeared in the Bridgeport Telegram (renamed the Connecticut Post) on April 6, 1987. The article describes my role, then as a specialized bank officer working with Connecticut Bank & Trust (CBT), of having observed problem of CRRA activities. I had been asked to review a proposal for a medium-scale independent resource recovery project proposed for the Town of Stratford. In order to do a diligent review, I decided that I should review also the large-scale state sponsored resource recovery project proposed for Bridgeport and the surrounding communities. As I reviewed the proposed CRRA project, I was convinced of better merit for the proposed Stratford Project. I placed my efforts into preparation of a loan package for the Stratford Project and was prepared to present that the CBT loan committee prior to August 31, 1985, the illegally imposed deadline that the CRRA had placed for communities to join its program. At a CBT officer reception in Hartford, I was introduced to Peter Shapiro, then the bank governmental relations officer. He asked me if I would be opposed to the loan committee postponing its review of the Stratford project loan package until August 31st. I was rather shocked at the suggestion. I said that I would like to please my client and earlier approval would benefit the project. Mr. Shapiro then commented, “Well, you see, Walter Connolly [chairman of the board for the CBT holding company] is very close to Governor O’Neill and Gov. O’Neill wants the CRRA to do very well! I reluctantly agreed to postpone the presentation of the loan application. Then just following August 31st, the account was transferred from me to another officer who had no experience in that type of specialized financing. She essentially buried the project. Two weeks later, I was fired without cause. They are not only racial minorities which are subject to political retaliation.

These and other facts which are described in the article which I will provide with the hard copy of these comments, have been widely distributed and never disputed. The facts as are described clearly describe a bid-rigging, monopolistic political conspiracy. Also, this situation, despite 28 years of litigation in state and federal courts, has not been reasonably resolved, not only to my detriment but also to the general public.

Just with this brief information, one can begin to understand why the yet unaddressed background involving the CRRA and various other state and local officials is important to the public and why there has been substantial impact to me as a financing specialist whom has been more greatly affected than the general public.

It was also in this setting that in the late 1980’s, I met Bill Finch. I utilized this background when he served as State Senator just prior to being elected Mayor. It is also in this setting that in January of 2011, I appeared at a Mayor’s Brown Bag Lunch, primarily to talk about other matters such as of the unlawful towing and impounding in 2010 of a Lincoln Town

Car owned by me and of the unlawful towing of a Jeep Cherokee of the late Adelaida Coriano. At the outset of my comments at that lunch meeting, Mayor Finch commented "Ethan, I hope you aren't going to talk about the CRRA. That makes my eyes water." Well, the subject makes my eyes water also! The situation which has occurred and been allowed to develop is horrific and shocking to the public conscience.

In my limousine service, when I transport high school students for special events, I sometimes hear parents say, "Mr. Book, please remember that you are carrying precious cargo". Well Council members, you also are carrying precious cargo; the sacred inalienable rights of the City's residents.

May God bless the City of Bridgeport, the State of Connecticut and our great nation.

Ethan Book

Cecil C. Young
99 Carroll Avenue
Bridgeport, CT 06607

False statements made to the Labor Board
regarding his medical benefits/taxes and
P.T. sewage problem.

Mr. Young thanked Council members Baker and Olson for the consideration of looking into the denial of his medical benefits.

He went on to speak about the tax increase to say that although Bridgeport may not have the highest taxes in Connecticut, they still need to relay to the governor that taxes are too high. He emphasized that many people are struggling and they don't have the finances to pay the high taxes. He expressed that we all need to come together and speak up to government officials. He said the residents need to be made aware of what's going on, so they aren't left behind. He said the tax burden is a hindrance to bringing new business to the city and other people will be reluctant to move here.

John Marshall Lee
30 Beacon Street
Bridgeport, CT 06605

Governance and Finance.

Below are the comments presented during the public speaking session

Conversation with Council – April 15, 2013

President McCarthy, Council members, fellow taxpayers and neighbors, and TV viewers, we are long overdue here in Bridgeport for a real conversation about money, of all kinds. Money for the operating budget delivered to you by the Mayor on April 2, but previously discussed with the CT Post in a special conversation on April 1, 2013. Money for the capital budget that you reviewed this past Saturday morning in a location that has doors that lock the public out on Saturday mornings (and lock them in if they manage to get in). Not much likelihood of conversations under those circumstances. But it was about the Capital budgets and borrowing for lots of school development, City infrastructure and equipment, and I listened to your comments requesting some record of what you have approved, authorized and is out there under development during the past five years. Those numbers are not on the City web site. Why not? When you have to ask OPM for this info, do you not understand that the public is in the dark too? How do you intelligently converse, if you do not have all the facts in front of you and know that they have been updated regularly and accurately?

For the first time in years you held a meeting on the CAFR on April 3 with OPM, Finance and CAO. It lasted about 90 minutes. One of facts that you learned in the overview was that the City sustained a "budget deficit" of \$3.5 Million for the year, 2012, rather than a slight surplus as thought at year end. Did the monthly financial report prepare you for that? Not the one from last June, because it was only a draft before year end adjustments. Has anyone asked for a final 12th month report so you can see where the 2012 budget did not

work out as proposed and voted upon? Have you mentioned the things you have learned in conversation with the community?

You were provided time to ask questions. One of the questions had to do with contradictions on page 3 and page 16 regarding whether City long term liabilities had increased or decreased during the 2012 fiscal year by \$37-38 Million. Did you get an answer showing an increase? I heard no questions from you on Internal Service Fund, on Pension Plan A or the Pension Obligation Bond, or on Pension B Fire and Police that is making news currently? Why don't you review these matters in a scheduled and orderly manner systematically each year? How many Budget & Appropriation meetings (or other Council committee meetings) are canceled each year and not rescheduled? Finally the external audit firm Blum Shapiro provides a Management Letter annually to accompany the audit and State and Federal single documents. Do you see the letters as part of your business in a public meeting? There is no sign in minutes that you do. Why not? There is work to be done and it goes undone.

One week ago I asked whether the Mayor's proposed budget of \$520 Million was complete. I made specific reference to page 7 that showed \$11 Million of new expenses in addition to the current appropriations of \$509 Million. As part of this City operating budget, the BOE is currently listed with almost \$220 Million and the Mayor proposed the same funding for the coming year. Will that meet the minimum budget requirement of the State of CT? Has the State formally informed OPM that an additional \$3.3 Million is necessary? What is the BOE budget? Hasn't the Mayor declared himself to be the "education Mayor"? How is flat funding an example of his "accountability"? Conversations require at least two parties to alternate speaking and listening roles. Neither our City Council public speaking format nor the Council public hearing format create conversations. Why not? Will you explain that to your public?

So the 2.5 Mill increase on the current 41.1 Mill rate calculates to be a 6% increase. 3.9% attributable to increased expenses of the Mayor's proposal, and 2.1% from anticipated loss of State revenues. You have the job of bringing City expenses into line with City taxpayer pocketbooks. You have heard the taxes are too much. But much blame has to fall on the fact that you are provided too little to see the big picture accurately, month by month throughout the year. As legislators you have two major responsibilities:

- Enacting ordinances to ensure the welfare and good order of the city
- Adopting the city's annual budget – but to do that competently it means learning and knowing the entirety of City finances whether bonded, taxed, granted, or provided by other levels of government.

It means asking the administration to avoid the regular Charter violations caused by tardy or incomplete monthly financial reports. And it means open, accountable and transparent process in City governance by finding ways to increase conversations throughout the year, not just before elections or at budget time. We are far from that today. Time will tell.

John Marshall Lee

The public speaking session closed at 6:55 pm.

CITY OF BRIDGEPORT

CITY COUNCIL MEETING

MONDAY, APRIL 15, 2013

7:00 PM

City Council Chambers, City Hall - 45 Lyon Terrace

Bridgeport, Connecticut

ATTENDANCE: Council members: Brannelly, Stafstrom, Banta, Taylor-Moye, Olson, Brantley, T. McCarthy, Lyons, Vizzo-Paniccia, Bonney, Blunt, dePara, Ayala, Paoletto, Baker, Holloway

ABSENT: Council members: Austin, Silva, Martinez

Mayor Finch called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm.

Prayer - the prayer was offered by Council member Taylor-Moye.

Moment of Silence - Council member Olson asked for a moment of silence for the victims of the Boston Marathon bombings.

Pledge of Allegiance - the pledge was led by Council President McCarthy.

Roll Call - the city clerk took the roll call and announced there was a quorum.

Announcements:

Council President McCarthy announced that the following council members were absent due to illness: Council members Austin, Martinez and Silva.

Council President McCarthy echoed Council member Olson's sentiment about the Boston bombings. He expressed that when you work in a large municipality; it creates worry when we hear about tragedies. However, in order to live in a free world, we sometimes take risks and although there are bad people in the world; there are also good people looking to do the right thing.

Mayor Finch relayed his thoughts about the Boston tragedy. He said he was deeply saddened by those that died and were injured, acknowledging the 2-year old that died. He expressed that what is normally a happy event, turned tragic. However, he said he was thankful for the first responders, the police force and all others that came forward to help.

Mayor Finch welcomed the Bridgeport Police officers (seated in the officer assignment box) that he said would be present during each city council meeting.

Mayoral Proclamations: Presented to the donors who helped fund the largest Gun Buyback Program in the City's history.

Mayor Finch stated that \$100k has been donated to purchase guns back. He noted that the next gun buyback event would be held on April 27, 2013 at the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit.

Mayor Finch, Council President McCarthy and Council member dePara came forward to present the citations to the following person/organization-*the recipients that were present came forward to accept the citation.*

City Council Citations: Presented to the donors who helped fund the largest Gun Buyback Program in the City's history.

- Aquarion Water Company
- Berchem, Moses & Devlin
- Bismark Construction
- Bridgeport Hospital
- Bridgeport Housing Authority – *an additional \$5k was donated and presented by Frank Borres*
- Bridgeport Regional Business Council
- Food Bazaar
- Joseph Luciano
- Koskoff, Koskoff & Bieder
- People's United Bank
- Public Service Electric and Gas (PSEG)
- Pullman and Comley
- Stratton Faxon
- Cigna
- St. Vincent's Medical Center

Mayor Finch relayed the background of how the program began, by one person donating \$10,000.

Council President stated on behalf of the city council that he appreciated everyone's generosity. He stressed that every gun off the street was good for the city.

Filling of Vacant City Council Seat in the 138th District

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Council member Paoletto stated that due Bob Curwen resigning from the city council, there was an open seat in the 138th District. He stated that the committee voted to appoint Michael Marella Jr. to fill the seat.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER PAOLETTO MOVED TO APPROVE**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNELLY SECONDED**

A roll call vote was taken *and*

**** MOTION PASSED WITH FIFTEEN VOTES IN FAVOR AND ONE VOTE IN OPPOSITION(COUNCIL MEMBER BAKER)**

Mayor Finch expressed congratulations and welcomed Mr. Marella back to the city council. He mentioned the Christmas and Easter village that is sponsored annually by Bpt. P.A.L. He recalled that Mike Marella was a former council member and he commented that he always had a vision for the city, such as the professional baseball stadium. He expressed that he was excited to be working with him again.

Council President McCarthy stated that they would gain a lot of experience with Mr. Marella serving on the city council.

Council member Olson commented it was also good to have a senior council member serve on the city council.

Michael Marella Jr. was sworn in by Mayor Finch as the appointed council member for the 138th District.

Council member Marella expressed his gratitude to the city council for having the confidence in him to return to the council seat. He stated that he intends to work hard and he has faith in the city and the city council.

Mayor Finch reconvened the meeting and returned to the agenda at 7:25 pm.

Changes to City Council Committees by Council President – April 15, 2013

Council President McCarthy read the following changes into the record:

1. John Olson appointed to Co-chair Education and Social Service Committee
2. Michael Marella Jr. appointed to Co-chair of Contracts Committee, to member of Economic and Community Development and Environment, and to member of Education and Social Service Committee. Also, Mr. Marella, Jr. is appointed as the City Council Liaison to Fire Commission.
3. Susan Brannelly removed as co-chair of Contracts Committee, remains as member of the Contracts Committee.

4. AmyMarie Vizzo-Paniccia removed from the Contracts Committee and appointed to Ordinance Committee.

**** COUNCIL PRESIDENT McCARTHY MOVED TO APPROVE**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNELLY SECONDED**

**** MOTION PASSED WITH FIFTEEN VOTES IN FAVOR AND ONE VOTE IN OPPOSITION(COUNCIL MEMBER BAKER)**

MINUTES FOR APPROVAL:

Approval of City Council Minutes: March 18, 2013

**** COUNCIL EMMBER BRANTLEY MOVED TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER PAOLETTO SECONDED**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

COMMUNICATIONS TO BE REFERRED TO COMMITTEES:

59-12 Communication from Public Facilities re: Application for Waiver to Extend Driveway Width Located at 4200 Park Avenue – Jewish Home Fairfield County Project, referred to Public Safety and Transportation Committee.

60-12 Communication from City Attorney re: Twenty Day Notice to Settle Pending Litigation Pursuant to Municipal Code Section 2.10.130: Pedro Ramos, Jr., **ACCEPTED AND MADE PART OF THE RECORD.**

61-12 Communication from Engineering re: (Ref. #35-11) Main Street Traffic Signal Improvements – Utilizing Federal Funds under the Urban Component of the Surface Transportation Program: State Project No. 15-360, Federal-Aid Project No. 1015(126), referred to Public Safety and Transportation Committee.

62-12 Communication from Engineering re: (Ref. #36-11) Iranistan Avenue Sidewalk Replacement – Utilizing Federal Funds under the Urban Component of the Surface Transportation Program: State Project No. 15-358, Federal-Aid Project No. 1015(124), referred to Public Safety and Transportation Committee.

**** COUNCIL PRESIDENT McCARTHY MOVED TO REFER COMMUNICATIONS TO BE REFERRED TO COMMITTEES**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANTLEY SECONDED**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

MATTERS TO BE ACTED UPON (CONSENT CALENDAR):

Mayor Finch asked if there were any items to be removed from the consent calendar.

Council member Brannelly made a request to remove item ***49-12** Contracts Committee Report re: Agreement with Water Pollution Control Authority (W.P.C.A.) and Sacred Heart University.

The city clerk read the remaining items into the record.

***46-12** Public Safety and Transportation Committee Report re: Grant Submission: State of Connecticut Judicial Branch Court Support Service Division (CSSD) – Youth Violence Prevention Legislation.

***41-12** Contracts Committee Report re: Assignment of Tax Liens for Fiscal Year 2013.

***49-12** Contracts Committee Report re: Agreement with Water Pollution Control Authority (W.P.C.A.) and Sacred Heart University. - *removed*

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNELLY MOVED TO APPROVE**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER PAOLETTO SECONDED**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

Mayor Finch returned to item ***49-12** Contracts Committee Report re: Agreement with Water Pollution Control Authority (W.P.C.A.) and Sacred Heart University.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNELLY MOVED TO APPROVE**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER LYONS SECONDED**

Council member Brannelly explained that the item was on the consent calendar because the committee didn't have the full agreement. The item was unanimously approved in committee. She explained the agreement between Sacred Heart University and WPCA. Sacred Heart will pay a \$100k flat fee, plus the WPCA rate.

ADDED:

COMMUNICATIONS TO BE REFERRED TO COMMITTEES:

63-12 Communication from City Attorney re: Proposed Resolution concerning Bridgeport Firefighters Pension Plan B, referred to Contracts Committee.

64-12 Communication from City Attorney re: Proposed Request from the Finance Department for Adoption of a Certain Standard Form Resolution concerning State Reimbursement for Tax Abatements Pursuant to C.G.S. 8-216, referred to Contracts Committee.

110-12 (New#)

~~*65-12~~ Communication from City Attorney re: Proposed Request of Cambridge Manor for Waiver of Restrictive Covenant, referred to Contracts Committee.

(*Please note: Item# 65-12 Duplicate number already assigned to another item due to City Clerk clerical error).

**** COUNCIL MEMBER PAOLETTO MOVED TO REFER COMMUNICATIONS TO BE REFERRED TO COMMITTEES**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER LYONS SECONDED**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

New business:

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANTLEY MOVED TO SUSPEND THE RULES FOR THE PURPOSE OF ADDING AN ITEM TO THE AGENDA FOR IMMEDIATE CONSIDERATION**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNELLY SECONDED**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANTLEY MOVED TO APPROVE 54-14 ROBIN HOOD FOUNDATION GRANT – ECONOMIC COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**

She explained that the foundation offered \$500k to assist those affected by Hurricane Sandy for low income housing projects. The item passed unanimously in committee.

**** COUNCIL PRESIDENT McCARTHY SECONDED**

Council member Brannelly asked if there was a city match. Council member Brantley said no.

Mayor Finch commented that receiving the grant was a real accomplishment by the Central Grants Office and Alexandra McGoldrick.

Council member Paoletto stated that he would abstain from the vote due to a conflict with his day job and that he helped with the grant.

It was also stated that Council member Banta would abstain from the vote.

**** MOTION PASSED WITH FOURTEEN VOTES IN FAVOR AND TWO ABSTENTIONS (COUNCIL MEMBERS BANTA and PAOLETTO)**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCA MOVED TO SUSPEND THE RULES FOR
THE PURPOSE OF ADDING ITEM TO THE AGENDA FOR A VOTE
** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNELLY SECONDED
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA MOVED TO APPROVE ITEM 58-12
PROPOSED WORKMAN'S COMPENSATION STIPULATION WITH MR.
ROBERTO DIAZ – MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS COMMITTEE
** COUNCIL MEMBER PAOLETTO SECONDED
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

ADJOURNMENT

**** COUNCIL MEMBER PAOLETTO MOVED TO ADJOURN
** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANTLEY SECONDED
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

The meeting adjourned at 7:40 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane Graham
Telesco Secretarial Services